

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite a vehicle steering wheel, comprising a hub, a steering wheel rim arranged radially distanced from said hub, and at least one spoke having at least one spoke section, a skeleton for said steering wheel rim and said spoke, said skeleton having first and second portions completely spaced apart and completely disconnected from each other in a radial direction with respect to a rotational axis of said steering wheel such that said skeleton parts do not directly contact each other and so that immediate force transmission in a radial direction between said radial inner and radial outer skeleton parts is interrupted, and a vibration-decoupling means for isolating vibration and bridging a distance between said skeleton parts, so that forces from one skeleton part are transmitted to the other skeleton part via only said vibration-decoupling means, said vibration-decoupling means acting in all directions and isolating said steering wheel rim vibrations from said at least one section of said spoke. Claim 1 was rejected on U.S. 6,443,030 to Schuler ("Schuler").

In Schuler, the inner leg and outer leg of rim 21 are attached by the top portion of rim 21 as shown in Fig. 5 of Schuler. Further, spoke 7 is also attached to rim 21. That is, Schuler does not disclose a skeleton having first and second portions completely spaced apart and completely disconnected from each other, as recited in claim 1.

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Schuler also does not disclose vibration-decoupling means for isolating vibration. In Schuler, additional mass 23 does not decouple the legs of rim 21 with respect to vibration. The additional mass 23 is not a vibration-decoupling means as recited in claim 1, but rather is a mass to increase the mass of the steering wheel. Further, in Schuler, because the legs of rim 21 are attached at the top of rim 21, vibrations would transfer through both, the additional mass 23 and the top portion of rim 21. That is, Schuler does not disclose that forces from one skeleton part are transmitted to another skeleton part via only vibration decoupling means, as recited in claim 1. Accordingly, Schuler does not disclose the structure of claim 1, and therefore, claim 1 should be allowed.

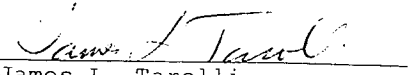
Claims 2-4 depend from claim 1 and are allowable the same reasons as claim 1 and for the specific limitations recited therein. Thus, allowance of claims 2-4 is respectfully requested.

Allowance of claims 13 and 14 is acknowledged.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in  
the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account  
No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

  
James L. Tarolli  
Reg. No. 36,029

TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL,  
& TUMMINO L.L.P.  
526 Superior Avenue, Suite 1111  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1400  
Phone: (216) 621-2234  
Fax: (216) 621-4072  
Customer No.: 26,294

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